

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USINT HAVANA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PDIP, CU

SUBJECT: COMMENTS OF CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER

1. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF FOREIGN MINISTER MALMIERCA'S CONVERSATION WITH ASST SEC TODMAN ON OCT 1.
2. PACE OF NORMALIZATION PROCESS. MALMIERCA COMMENTED THAT PRESIDENT CASTRO'S SEPT 29 STATEMENTS THAT PROCESS OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH US WOULD BE PROLONGED REPRESENTED CUBA'S EVALUATION OF SITUATION, NOT ITS HOPE. THEY UNDERSTOOD OUR DIFFICULTIES WITH CANAL TREATIES AND THAT FOR TIME BEING WE MIGHT NOT WISH TO TAKE MAJOR NEW STEPS VIS-A-VIS CUBA. CUBA WOULD BE PATIENT AND IT COULD RESPOND TO ACTS AND POSITIVE ATTITUDES ON OUR PART; BUT THERE WAS LIMIT TO HOW FAR IT COULD GO. MOST OF STEPS WERE ON US SIDE. THERE WERE FEW CUBA COULD TAKE AND CLEARLY IT COULD NOT TAKE THEM ALL EVEN BEFORE US LIFTED EMBARGO.

3. US PRISONERS. CASES ARE UNDER REVIEW. SOME--ESPECIALLY
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THOSE OF "HIJACKERS"--WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO TAKE ACTION ON, OTHERS MAY BE RELATIVELY EASY. ISSUE ITSELF DOES NOT POSE MAJOR PROBLEM. MANY PRISONERS IN CUBA DO NOT SERVE THEIR FULL SENTENCES, PROVIDED THEY HAVE PROPER ATTITUDE. (COMMENTS: MALMIERCA'S REMARKS SEEMED TO HOLD OUT SOME

HOPE OF NEAR-TERM RELEASE OF AT LEAST A FEW US POLITICAL

PRISONERS. WE WILL ATTEMPT TO CLARIFY WITH SANCHEZ-PARODI TO WHOM MALMI"RCA AND CASTRO REFER WHEN THEY SPEAK OF "HIJACKERS".)

4. AFRICA. THERE WILL BE REDUCTIONS IN CUBAN TROOP STRENGTH IN ANGOLA AS CONDITIONS PERMIT. BUT THIS WILL COME ABOUT AS RESULT OF DEVELOPING SITUATION IN ANGOLA, NOT AS PART OF PROCESS OF NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH US. CUBA HAD INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO BEGIN WITHDRAWING PRIOR TO INVASION OF SHABA PROVINCE (IN WHICH, MALMIERCA SAID, CUBA HAD IN NO WAY BEEN INVOLVED). INTRODUCTION OF MOROCCAN TROOPS AND CONSEQUENT THREAT OF INVASION HAD HALTED DRAWDOWN, BUT WHEN THREAT HAD PASSED AND MPLA'S OWN FORCES IN POSITION TO ASSURE COUNTRY'S SECURITY, IT WOULD BEGIN AGAIN. HE REITERATED CUBAN POSITION THAT ITS TROOPS HAD BEEN SENT ONLY TO PREVENT SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES FROM TAKING OVER COUNTRY.

5. EXILE TERRORISM. MALMIERCA WAS GRATIFIED BY AMB. TODMAN'S ASSURANCES THAT US INTENDS TO ACT VIGOROUSLY TO HALT EXILE TERRORISM. THIS HAD ALWAYS BEEN SORE POINT. HE REAFFIRMED THAT CUBA, FOR ITS PART, WILL CONTINUE TO PROSECUTE ANY HIJACKERS WHO MAY ARRIVE THERE AND WILL DO NOTHING WHICH MIGHT ENCOURAGE HIJACKING.

6. ISA. CUBA'S POSITION IS THAT FLOOR PRICE SHOULD BE
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ABOVE PRODUCTION COSTS, THUS AVOIDING RUIN FOR PRODUCERS, BUT HIGH ENOUGH TO PROTECT BUYERS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT CUBA WANTED AGREEMENT AND HE FELT ONE COULD BE ACHIEVED IF THERE IS WILL ON BOTH SIDES.

7. USINT'S REQUEST FOR IMPORTATION FOODSTUFFS. MALMIERCA SAID THERE WAS ONE MATTER RELATING TO OUR INTERESTS SECTION WHICH CAUSED HIM DISCOMFORT: THAT WAS SECTION'S REQUEST TO BRING IN FOOD SUPPLIES. HE HAD LEFT IT ENDING BUT THOUGHT HE MIGHT HAVE TO TURN SOME ITEMS DOWN. THERE WERE STRICT HEALTH AND SANITATION RULES -- ESPECIALLY AGAINST IMPORTATION OF MEATS. MOREOVER, WHILE GOC WISHED TO COOPERATE WITH USINT, IT COULD NOT GIVE THEM ADVANTAGES NOT ENJOYED BY OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS.

8. TODMAN REPLIED THAT WE DID NOT HAVE DETAILS OF SITUATION AND WOULD THUS LEAVE IT IN HANDS OF OUR MINISTER, CONFIDENT THAT HE WOULD DO THE BEST HE COULD IN KEEPING WITH WHAT IS AFFORDED TO OTHER DIPLOMATS. HE ALSO EXPECTED THERE WOULD BE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR INITIAL SHIPMENTS.

9. MALMIERCA SAID HE WOULD STUDY THE MATTER MORE CLOSELY WHEN HE RETURNED TO HAVANA AND WOULD INFORM USINT OF DECISION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT CUBA WOULD NOT TAKE ANY STEPS WITH RESPECT TO USINT WHICH DID NOT APPLY TO OTHER DIPLOMATS AS WELL.

10. COMMENT: IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT OTHER MISSIONS IN HAVANA DO IMPORT FOODSTUFFS. IT MIGHT BE WELL TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH SOME OF YOUR COLLEAGUES AND, IF OUR UNDERSTANDING IS CORRECT, REMIND LUIS GARCIA THAT IN ASKING TO IMPORT CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONSUMABLES, WE ARE NOT ASKING FOR PRIVILEGES NOT ENJOYED BY OTHER DIPLOMATS.

CHRISTOPHER
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